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Security Council

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Letter dated 8 June 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 30 April 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the attached report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on Kosovo Force (KFOR) operations

1. Over the reporting period (1 to 30 April 2001) there were approximately 43,000 Kosovo Force (KFOR) troops in theatre, with no major changes in deployment since the last report.

2. Lieutenant General Thorstein Skiaker took over as the new Commander of KFOR on 6 April.

3. The conditional and controlled return of the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the ground safety zone, which began in March with Sectors A, C (East) and C (West), continued during the reporting period. The entry of the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into Sector D started on 14 April and has taken place without incident.

4. On 25 April a group of 144 Kosovar Albanian prisoners were released back into Kosovo at Gate 3 under International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) arrangements as part of the Amnesty Law of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The majority of these prisoners were from the so-called Dakovica group — Kosovar Albanians taken prisoner at random at the end of the conflict and accused of terrorism. The majority of ethnic Albanian prisoners remaining in Serbia are detained on criminal charges. There was no reaction in Kosovo to the arrest of President Milosevic on 1 April.

5. The number of refugees making their way into Kosovo from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[a] during the period from mid-February until the end of March has reached a total of 8,432.

Security

6. During the reporting period, the level of inter-ethnic violence remained high. From the middle of April, KFOR had to deal with public disorder in Mitrovica and northern Kosovo when Kosovar Serbs reacted against the implementation of the excise and sales tax collection policy of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Exchanges continued between ethnic Albanian armed groups and the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Presevo Valley and in the ground safety zone.

7. The establishment of excise and sales tax collection points by UNMIK[b] along the boundary with Serbia in the middle of April caused a reaction from Kosovar Serbs, who began to build blockades and block roads with dustbins and vehicles in northern Kosovo and in Mitrovica, reducing vehicle movement to a minimum for a few days. On 19 April, KFOR began to dismantle the blockades over several days and used tear-gas to control the crowds. Four KFOR soldiers were injured in these incidents and a Kosovar Serb was wounded and later died after a grenade was thrown by someone in the crowd. Full freedom of movement was restored in northern Kosovo by the end of the month.

8. Inter-ethnic incidents and intimidation continued during the reporting period. On 6 April a 36-year-old male Serb was found shot in the head in Idriz Selmani; and on 14 April a Kosovar Albanian was found machine-gunned to death in his car near

Lugovic. Four Kosovar Serb houses were blown up in Vitina on 8 April, following which a Serb priest reported that up to 70 Serb families were leaving the town because they no longer felt safe. The priest also reported that this was seen as a failure of KFOR and UNMIK to protect the Serb families. On 18 April, anti-tank rounds were fired near Vellca Hoca and six men were seen escaping. The attack on this village brought the number to seven in a 10-month period. On 28 April, a car exploded without warning in Pristina — no one was injured. On 30 April, a Kosovar Serb and a Kosovar Albanian were shot from a passing car. The Serb died of his wounds.

9. Criminally and politically motivated acts of violence were also evident during the reporting period. In Klina, on 24 April, a Kosovar Albanian who was President of the local assembly and representative of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) was shot dead outside his apartment — this shooting is seen as politically motivated. On 18 April a prominent Kosovar Serb died in Pristina when his car exploded and eight persons were injured. A suspect has been arrested following this incident which is believed to be criminally motivated. Five hand grenades exploded in two coffee bars and two grenades were found intact in the vicinity of Zrze. No one was injured and these incidents are also believed to be criminally motivated.

10. Several peaceful demonstrations took place across the province for a variety of reasons. The biggest demonstration of between 5,000 and 6,000 Kosovar Albanians took place near Gnjilane on 2 April against the treatment of ethnic Albanians in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On 17 April, the so-called Eskodi March, starting from Mitrovica and involving about 3,000 people, took place to commemorate Albanians displaced in 1999. A meeting of 2,000 people, which took place in Mitrovica on 24 April, was addressed by a member of the Serb National Council of Northern Kosovo Social Affairs Committee. The crowd was urged to persist in demands and remain on blockades to protest against the imposition of the border tax collection policy.

11. During the period under review, KFOR troops uncovered and confiscated significant amounts of weapons, ammunition and explosives across the province as well as computers, stolen cars and alcohol in or near Banjica, Prelovac, Pristina, Seciste, Debelde, Kojlovica, Pasino Selo, Tebovic and Jagado. At least four Kosovar Albanians involved in the incidents were detained. The weapons destruction programme is scheduled to begin again on 11 June, once necessary repairs to the furnace have been completed.

12. The "Nis Express" service resumed on 17 April with appropriate measures taken by KFOR to protect the convoy.

Illegal border activity

13. KFOR forces continue to provide appropriate control of Kosovo's internal boundaries, external borders and recognized crossing points. KFOR continues to reinforce control on the external border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in order to deter and interdict cross-border infiltration and to confiscate weapons and ammunition. On 14 April, a KFOR vehicle hit a mine near Krivenik, killing one soldier and injuring two others.

14. In the Presevo Valley and throughout the ground safety zone, firefights, small arms and mortar fire were reported on a daily basis. On 4 April, a vehicle of the

armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia escorting KFOR forces ran over a mine, killing one Serbian Special Police (MUP) officer and injuring two others. On 11 April, KFOR troops were fired at. One soldier was killed and another injured. Twenty-one suspected members of the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) were detained. On 14 and 15 April, five Yugoslav hostages were released by the ethnic Albanian armed groups.

Security Council resolution 1160 (1998)

15. Although KFOR operations continue to result in weapons seizures there have been no reported violations of Security Council resolution 1160 (1998).

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

16. Over the reporting period, there were 13 cases reported of non-compliance among the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), including the arrest by UNMIK police of a KPC commander, Ruzhdi Saramati, on suspicion of an attempted murder dating back to 1993. Four members of his staff were also detained for interfering in his arrest, and 400 demonstrators in Prizren blocked roads in protest. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) continues to approve the funding of KPC humanitarian and minor infrastructure projects. Excluding the time spent on the "Kosovo Clean-up Week", the total number of man-days devoted to KPC community projects has now reached 39,728.

17. The security forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remain in general compliance with the terms of the Military Technical Agreement.

Cooperation with international organizations

18. KFOR continues to provide daily assistance, on request, to international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout Kosovo and to provide security assistance in support of UNMIK police operations.

19. Consultations are being held between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNMIK and KFOR to assess the events that led to the expulsion of non-Kosovar Serb families from northern Mitrovica in the middle of March. Minority families allege that the level of protection provided by KFOR and UNMIK police is inadequate.

20. KFOR continues to advise and assist the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in planning for the Kosovo-wide elections. The Joint Working Group on the Legal Framework has reached agreement in principle on the basic provisions to be observed by the provisional institutions.

21. Although the transfer of railway operations from KFOR to UNMIK took place in March, after being under military control since July 1999, KFOR continues to assist UNMIK's Department of Transport and Infrastructure in repairing railway lines linking Kosovo and Serbia. In addition, and until an agreement is signed between UNMIK and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, KFOR will continue to operate the trains crossing the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Outlook

22. The security situation in Kosovo continues to be affected by the violence in the northern area of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and has increased the risk to KFOR personnel.

Notes

[a] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

[b] UNMIK has stated that the establishment of tax collection points was in accordance with the revenue arrangements that apply in Kosovo and that all residents of Kosovo benefit from these revenues. The regulation enabling the establishment of these tax collection points dates from 1999, and the first tax collection point on the administrative boundary line was established in February 2000.